CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 7 AUGUST 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF EGYPT ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A LETTER DATED 21 JULY 1991 FROM THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF EGYPT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCERNING THE RECENT PROPOSALS ON ARMS LIMITATION AND DISARMAMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

I am pleased to invite the attention of the Conference on Disarmament to the letter dated 21 July 1991 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the recent proposals on arms limitation and disarmament in the Middle East.

This letter has been reproduced on 30 July 1991 as an official document of the General Assembly A/46/329 and the Security Council S/22855.

May I request, Mr. President, the circulation of this document as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed) Dr. Nabil ELARABY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

GE.91-62225/6953a

Letter dated 21 July 1991 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt addressed to the Secretary-General

The world has in recent years been the scene of momentous and historic developments which have radically changed the climate of international relations. This change has been accompanied by progress whose significance resides in agreement on concrete measures for arms reduction and disarmament. These are all developments which will, we hope, have a positive impact at the international level and direct results at the regional level, particularly in areas of tension and conflict.

In this connection, Egypt has consistently affirmed that the Middle East region requires intensive efforts on the part of all nations of the region to initiate a peace process which will lead to a just solution of its unresolved problems - first and foremost being the question of Palestine - in such a way as to ensure peaceful coexistence between the various parties in an atmosphere of peace, stability and justice. This process may be accompanied by activity in the sphere of arms reduction and disarmament, the objective being to spare the region from superfluous threats. It is our conviction that the arms race in the region - including nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction - impedes and threatens peace efforts, besides constituting a serious threat to the region's future.

Accordingly, Egypt has since 1974 - in the context of the United Nations - called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. This call has been the object of a consensus in the General Assembly for over 10 years in succession. In addition, President Hosni Mubarak proposed in April 1990 that the Middle East should be declared a region free of all weapons of mass destruction, because it is Egypt's perception that threats to the region have continued to grow, particularly in the course of recent years, as a result of the accumulation of arms. This proposal was designed to reaffirm Egypt's role in evaluating the situation in the region and in contributing to the suggestion of practical and constructive solutions to counter any danger to which the region may be subjected.

The recent events in the Middle East induced many States to endorse our latest initiative, which was also endorsed by the Security Council in the context of its resolution 687 (1991). These developments also prompted a number of countries to make their own proposals on arms limitation, particularly in the Middle East. Egypt welcomed all initiatives and ideas designed to contribute to the promotion of international and regional stability and security and promised to engage in a constructive dialogue concerning such initiatives.

As a first step, and with a view to demonstrating the extent of Egypt's commitment and determination to take part in these discussions in a constructive manner, President Hosni Mubarak addressed letters to the Heads of State and Government of the five permament members of the Security Council and the major industrialized countries engaged in consultations on these matters, in order to acquaint them both with Egypt's position on the subjects of arms reduction and with its recent proposals.

In this connection, I should like to note that Egypt regards positively all disarmament proposals which ensure the following:

(a) Increased security for the nations of our region while maintaining lower quantities of armaments, bearing in mind that security can be achieved only through peaceful relations, dialogue and political arrangements, eschewing the logic of force;

(b) A qualitative and quantitative balance between the military capabilities of all States in the region, because a continuation of the current imbalance is unacceptable in a region which is striving for a just and comprehensive peace;

(c) The conclusion of agreements on arms reduction and disarmament which may be applied to all States of the region and be complemented by effective monitoring measures and at the same time secure equal rights and responsibilities for those nations, while allowing the nations of the region to cooperate with the international community in establishing arrangements for arms reduction and disarmament so that the problem may be addressed in an integrated and comprehensive manner in accordance with those nations' real security requirements;

(d) The accordance of priority to ridding the region of weapons of mass destruction - particularly nuclear, chemical and biological weapons - together with consideration of measures for conventional arms reduction when political circumstances permit, following the achievement of peace in the region or, at least, once the peace process has made substantial progress towards the attainment of its goal.

I am pleased to inform you that, on 5 July 1991, Egypt announced a series of additional ideas and proposals designed to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on efforts to reduce armaments in our region and, in particular, to accelerate the establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

These proposals are as follows:

(a) Egypt calls on the major arms-producing States - and particularly the permament members of the Security Council - as well as Israel, Iran and the Arab States to deposit undertakings with the Security Council in which they clearly and unconditionally endorse the declaration of the Middle East as a region free of weapons of mass destruction and commit themselves not to take any steps or measures which would run counter to or impede the attainment of that objective.

(b) Egypt calls on the arms-producing States and the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to step up their efforts to ensure that all Middle East nations which have not yet done so adhere to the Treaty, in recognition of the fact that this is a step of the utmost importance and urgency.

(c) Egypt calls on nations of the Middle East region which have not yet done so to declare their commitment:

(i) Not to use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons;

(ii) Not to produce or acquire any nuclear weapons;

(iii) Not to produce or acquire any nuclear materials susceptible to military use and to dispose of any existing stocks of such materials;

(iv) To accept the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime whereby all their nuclear facilities become subject to international inspection.

(d) Egypt calls on those nations of the region which have not yet done so to declare their commitment to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as to the Convention concerning the prohibition of biological weapons of 1972, no later than the conclusion of the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons being conducted by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

(e) Egypt calls on Middle East States to declare their commitment actively and fairly to address measures relating to all forms of delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction.

(f) Egypt calls on nations of the region to approve the assignement to an organ of the United Nations or another international organization of a role, to be agreed upon at a future date, in the verification of those nations' compliance with such agreements on arms reduction and disarmament as may be concluded between them.

In order to give added impetus to the negotiations between all the parties concerned with these matters, Egypt intends to make direct contact with the major parties concerned - both internationally and in the Middle East region - by dispatching envoys and through the use of conventional diplomatic channels, with a view to discussing these various ideas and means for their implementation in both the bilateral and multilateral contexts at the regional and international levels.

(Signed) Amre MOUSSA
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Arab Republic of Egypt